

Church at Home

Fourth Sunday of Eastertide | May 3, 2020

In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, we have suspended our regular Sunday worship services and are encouraging people to worship together in their homes. This resource is intended to be flexible and adaptable for a variety of settings, depending on the gifts and resources available. It is structured after our regular worship service, but you may do what works for your context. Some sections have recommendations for worshipping in families with small children.

Gathering & Greeting

<p style="text-align: center;">Call to Worship <i>(Psalm 28:6-7)</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Praise be to the Lord, for he has heard my cry for mercy. The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The same God who calls us to worship greet us with these words:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“Grace and peace to you, from God our Father, and the Lord, Jesus Christ.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Amen.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>*For families with small children*</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">We come to worship God today, because he has invited us to worship him.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">We worship God because we trust in him. He is our strength and our hope.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Let’s sing to him!</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Families may light a candle as they begin Sunday worship as a visual reminder that worship is a special time when we rest in God’s presence in a special way.</i></p>
--	---

Song Suggestions:

Depending on your context and gifts, you may want to sing along with songs on YouTube, have someone lead with piano and guitar, or sing together a capella. Feel free to break open the songbook or hymnal and sing your family’s favourites, or pick a few from these suggestions (check the [Church at Home page](#) for a YouTube playlist).

Come Thou Fount, Come Thou King
Because He Lives
Death Was Arrested

He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands
He Leadeth Me
I Am Not My Own

Confession & Assurance

Read I Peter 2:19-25

Prayer of Confession:

**Gracious God,
we confess that you are sovereign
over all things
in heaven, and on the earth,
and under the earth.**

**We confess we do not know
why you allow this suffering to endure.
We confess we do not know
why we must wait for your salvation.**

**But we know and are assured
that our Lord Jesus Christ
suffered for our sakes,
that our sins might be forgiven
and our transgressions washed away.**

**Guide us, O Lord, your humble flock.
Fill us with the hope of your presence,
with the assurance of your promises,
O Shepherd and Guardian of our souls.**

Amen.

The prayer of confession may be followed by a time of silence, if desired.

Assurance of Pardon:

Read John 10:1-10.

Hear the good news: In Jesus, our Good Shepherd, we are brought into the flock of God. Our sins are forgiven, and we are saved! **Thanks be to God!**

For families with small children

Read Jesus' teaching on the Good Shepherd (John 10) from a children's Bible or a simplified translation (like the New International Reader's Version) and talk with your children about how Jesus protects us like a shepherd protects his sheep.

Prayer:

**Dear Jesus, you are our Good Shepherd.
Please forgive us for when we wander off.
Help us to always trust in you to guide us,
especially when we feel scared.**

Amen.

Families may talk about how baptism reminds us that we belong to God. The sign of water on our foreheads is a "sign and seal" of our salvation, marking us as belonging to God. It's like when you write your name on your toys or on the tag of your clothes, so that everyone will know that it's yours. That's what God does in baptism. He writes his name on us so that everyone will know that we belong to God.

Hearing the Word

Scripture Reading: Psalm 23

Song of Preparation: The Lord, My Shepherd, Rules My Life

The sermon video will be available on the church website under “Sermons” and on the Church at Home webpage.

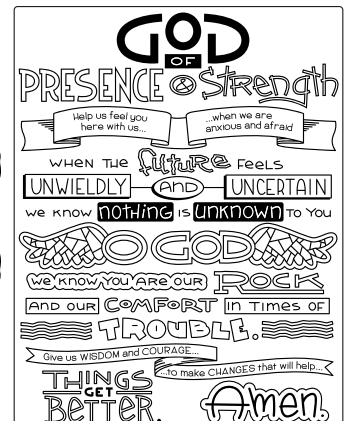
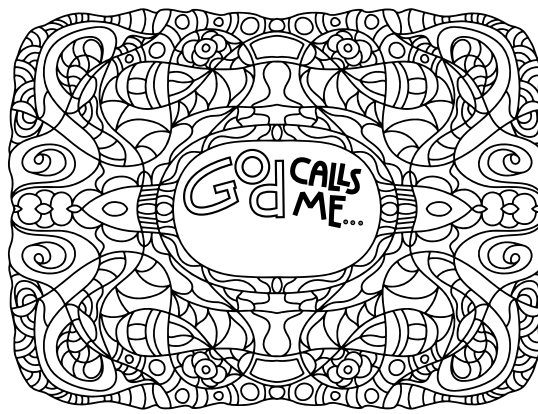
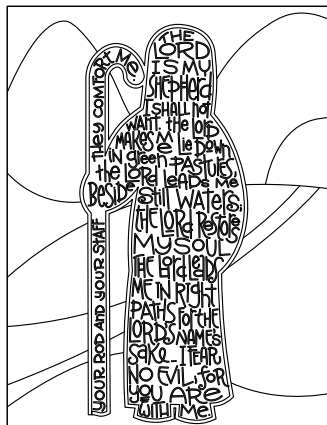
If households prefer not to watch a sermon video, read the passage together from your preferred translation or a children’s Bible. A sermon manuscript can also be found on the Church at Home webpage if people prefer to read the sermon.

Prayer of Application

O Lord, our Shepherd, we pray for your guidance throughout our lives. Give us the assurance of your presence, even when, in the course of our lives, we walk through darkness and shadow. Our hope is in you, for you have won the victory, even over death. Amen.

Shameless plug for a great resource

Check out Illustrated Ministry. Illustrated Ministry provides beautiful artistic resources for prayer, scripture reading, and devotions. During the COVID-19 pandemic, they are providing free weekly resources for families and churches. Subscribe at <https://www.illustratedministry.com/flattenthecurve>.



Responding to God's Word

Song of Response: Christ be All Around Me

Prayers of the People

<p>Given the reality that all of us are encouraged to stay at home, reflect together on what you “see” happening in this time. How has your perspective on this changed over the week? This can be a great time for parents to check-in with their kids, and to be honest with their kids about their own struggles and fears. Take a pulse of how each other are doing. What has been joy-filled about this past week? What has been challenging?</p> <p>Invite everyone to share what they would like to lift up to God, their joys and sorrows, hopes and fears.</p> <p>Review the “Church Family News” section of the bulletin on the church website.</p> <p>Close with the Lord’s Prayer.</p>	<p><i>*For families with small children*</i></p> <p><i>Memorizing the Lord's Prayer is a great way to equip your children with important worship language. If you've already memorized the Lord's Prayer, start memorizing a Psalm together.</i></p> <p><i>Try “stick prayers.” Use tongue depressors or strips of construction paper to write names of people, groups of people, or parts of the world your children want to pray for (ex: grandparents, neighbours, doctors and nurses, teachers, friends, Forest Heights Long-Term Care Home, etc.). Then use the sticks throughout the week for prayer time before bed—pick two or three to pray for each night.</i></p>
--	--

Offering

If you desire to give financially in this time, please check the bulletin for the most up-to-date options for giving.

Today's second offering is for Friendship Ministries Canada. The vision of Friendship is “people with and without intellectual disability growing deeper in their relationship with God and with each other in community together.” They believe that faith is a gift from God that does not depend on any level of human intelligence. To contribute online visit friendship.org/give.

Check the [Church at Home page](#) for a ministry update video from our local Friendship club!

Blessing

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord smile upon you, and give you peace.

Amen.

Close by singing the Doxology or an appropriate song.